

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY M. Delapena DATE 3-13-81

RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TO AUTH. REASON(S)

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DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒

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TALKING POINTS

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S APPEARANCE BEFORE CHAIRMAN FASCELL'S

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

FEBRUARY 26, 1979

-- "Spike" Dubs is the latest casualty of the Foreign Service in a series of terrorist incidents going back for more than a decade.

-- While we have vastly improved our preventive, protective and incident management capabilities to deal with such situations, there remain vulnerabilities which can result in such tragic events as occurred in Kabul.

-- Within 45 minutes of being alerted by our Operations Center, the Department's Office for Combatting Terrorism had organized its Working Group to deal with the incident.

-- Our initial response to Embassy Kabul's request for guidance was to emphasize our underlying concern that no action be taken by the DRA which would endanger Ambassador Dubs' safety. Additionally, we set in motion the authorization procedure for sending in the DAO aircraft from Islamabad for possible medical evacuation. Our regional psychiatrist, Dr. Elmore Rigamer, was on that aircraft.

-- Mrs. Dubs was informed of events almost immediately. At the same time we established a direct phone line to Embassy Kabul in order to obtain information as rapidly as possible.

-- Our immediate attention focused on who the terrorists were and for what purpose they had kidnapped the Ambassador.

-- Despite repeated Afghan assurances that no precipitate action would be taken; it is now clear that the DRA already had decided for its own reasons to carry out the fatal assault.

-- We are conducting a thorough investigation of the exact cause of the Ambassador's death using the available forensic and ballistics data that we have assembled.

-- There is no question about the ~~overwhelming~~ presence of Soviet advisors at the hotel site where the Ambassador was

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killed nor about the operational role which those advisors played in the actual assault.

-- From our experience and knowledge of such incidents, the apparent purpose of the terrorists in taking Ambassador Dubs to the hotel was to conduct some sort of negotiation. To what exact purpose, is still not clear. We have only the statement of the DRA that the terrorists posed an inflexible deadline for the authorities to produce a detainee.

-- We have no basis to confirm or refute the DRA contention that the terrorists were planning to execute the Ambassador in 10 minutes thereby forcing the Afghans to attempt the "rescue operation." We can, however, seriously question what appears to be clear intent of the DRA to mislead our Embassy with false assurances and its failure to use any number of plausible, delaying tactics which are standard procedure in such hostage-barricade situations.

-- We have made clear to the DRA our strong displeasure over their actions which resulted in the death of Ambassador Dubs. Protests have been registered with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister.

-- As a result of our ongoing review of our relations with Afghanistan, and taking into account the circumstances surrounding Ambassador Dubs' death, the President has decided to reduce severely our economic assistance program and to terminate our military training program in that country. We are also taking a careful look at our other activities in Afghanistan.

-- On the day of Ambassador Dubs' death, the Acting Secretary protested to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin the role played by Soviet advisers at the Kabul Hotel. Subsequently, the incident was (raised) by Ambassador Toon with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in Moscow.

Clearances:

M/CT:JEKarkashian/JTJohnson:nwh

M/CT:ACEQuainton
NEA/PAB:R Lorton

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